

Docket No.: FILIPP
Appl. No.: 09/977,451

- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the appropriate fee of \$55.00 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.17(c) and 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) and any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-0502.
- ☒ The Commissioner is hereby also authorized to charge any fees which may be required during the pendency of this application, including any patent application processing fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.17, and any filing fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16, including presentation of extra claims, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No: 06-0502.

Please amend the above-entitled application as follows:

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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES
MADE, AND LISTING OF ALL CLAIMS WITH PROPER INDENTIFIERS**

1. (Currently amended) A dowel, comprising:
a dowel component having at least one longitudinal slot and formed with a cylindrical internal thread; and
a spreader screw for threaded engagement in the internal thread of the dowel component,
wherein the internal thread has at least one cylindrical expansion zone having an axial length and being defined by a thread diameter which is ~~constantly~~ smaller throughout the axial length than a thread diameter of the spreader screw, and wherein the expansion zone has a thread pitch which is the same as a thread pitch of the spreader screw.
2. (Original) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the spreader screw has a length which is shorter than an overall length of the internal thread.
3. (Original) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the spreader screw has a nominal diameter which corresponds to a nominal diameter of the internal thread outside the expansion zone.

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4. (Currently amended) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the expansion zone is extended by a tapered portion toward an associated end face of the dowel component.
5. (Currently amended) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the dowel component has a pocket extending in an axial direction ~~over~~ along a major portion of the internal thread outside the expansion zone.
6. (Currently amended) The dowel of claim 5, and further comprising a coupling piece for placement in the pocket, wherein the dowel component has at least one radial threaded bore, extending from outside ~~to~~ in a direction of the pocket, for threaded engagement of a safety screw which interacts with the coupling piece.
7. (Original) The dowel of claim 6, and further comprising a fastening screw for threaded engagement into the coupling piece, wherein the fastening screw has a thread diameter which corresponds to a thread diameter of the internal thread.
8. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the expansion zone extends substantially over an entire length of the dowel component.

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9. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 8, wherein the dowel component has opposite ends, each formed with at least one longitudinal slot, wherein the longitudinal slot of one of the ends of the dowel component and the longitudinal slot of the other one of the ends of the dowel component are disposed in offset disposition and partially overlap one another.
10. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 9, wherein each of the ends of the dowel component has two such longitudinal slots.
11. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 10, wherein the longitudinal slots on each side directly oppose one another.
12. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 10, wherein the longitudinal slots are disposed in evenly offset disposition.
13. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 8, wherein the expansion zone has opposite ends, at least one end formed as an entry zone defined by a thread diameter which corresponds to a thread diameter of the spreader screw.
14. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the dowel component has opposite ends, each end including a said expansion zone.

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15. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 13, wherein the expansion zone has an end distal to the entry zone, wherein said end of the expansion zone has an inside surface which flares outwards.
16. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 13, wherein the expansion zone has an end distal to the entry zone, wherein said end of the expansion zone has an inside surface which is straight and defined by a diameter which corresponds to a minor diameter of the internal thread.
17. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 13, wherein the dowel component has an outer surface in the area of the entry zone, wherein the outer surface is provided with a profiled marking.
18. (Withdrawn) The dowel of claim 1, wherein the dowel component has an outer surface formed substantially with an external thread.
19. (Currently amended) A dowel assembly, comprising:
 - a first dowel component having at least one longitudinal slot and formed with an internal thread;
 - a second dowel component having at least one longitudinal slot and formed with a internal thread;
 - a fastening screw intended for threaded engagement in the internal thread of the first dowel component and in the internal thread of the second dowel

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component;

a pair of spreader screws, one spreader screw intended for threaded engagement in the internal thread of the first dowel component, and the other spreader screw intended for threaded engagement in the internal thread of the second dowel component,

wherein the internal thread of each of the first and second dowel components has at least one cylindrical expansion zone having an axial length and being defined by a thread diameter[[,]] which is smaller throughout the axial length than a thread diameter of the spreader screw, and wherein the expansion zone has a thread pitch which is the same as a thread pitch of the spreader screw.

20. (Currently amended) The dowel assembly of claim 19, wherein the expansion zone is tapered at one axial end thereof.
21. (Currently amended) The dowel assembly of claim 19, and further comprising a coupling piece, wherein the second dowel component has a pocket extending in an axial direction inwardly of the expansion zone and receiving the coupling piece for interaction with a safety screw to secure the first and second dowel components in place.

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22. (Currently amended) The dowel assembly of claim 19, wherein each of the first and second dowel ~~component~~ components is formed with axial slots to define radially deflectable segments for pressing against a confronting wall of the handles, when the spreader screw is moved into the expansion zone.